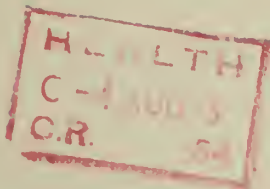


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RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1952.

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

COPY

BRIDGWATER BOROUGH AND RURAL DISTRICT
COUNCILS,
TURNHAM-ON-SEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Health Department,
Albert Street,
Bridgwater.

11th September, 1953.

Dear Sir,

RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER
Annual Report of the M.O.H. for 1952.

I should be glad if you would make the following alteration to copies of the above report sent to you on 31st ultimo:-

Housing - Paragraph I - line 2

Delete word "No" on end of line and insert figure "33".

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) A.H. Watson.

Medical Officer of Health.

The Secretary,
Ministry of Health,
Savile Row,
London, W.1.

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RURAL DISTRICT OF BRIDGWATER
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1952

Health Department,
Albert Street,
BRIDGWATER.

July, 1953.

To:-

The Chairman and Members of the
Bridgwater Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1952.

The health of the community has been good and there were no large outbreaks of any of the notifiable diseases. There was, however, a high incidence of influenza at the beginning of the year, but generally speaking the illness was of a mild nature, and serious complications were seldom seen. Little or no dislocation of public services was caused by this epidemic.

The Crude Birth Rate was 16.33, the Corrected Birth Rate being 16.29, as compared with that of 17.41 for the previous year. The Provisional Birth Rate for England and Wales was 15.3.

The Crude Death Rate was 12.12, the Corrected Death Rate being 10.54 as compared with 11.01 for the previous year. The Provisional Death Rate for England and Wales was 11.3.

The Infantile Mortality Rate was 18.87 which was a considerable reduction on the previous year which was 25.64. As a comparison the rate for England and Wales was 27.6.

It should be noted that these Vital Statistics compare very favourably with those of the Country as a whole, the Birth Rate in the Rural District being higher and the Death Rate lower.

Housing.

During the year 36 permanent houses were erected by the Council and a further 76 were in course of erection. ~~No~~³³ houses were erected by Private Enterprise. The number of applicants for Council houses is at last showing a reduction, the number at 31.12.52 being 564.

I would like to direct your attention to the observations of the Chief Sanitary Inspector on the dangers of accepting too low a standard, where the owner of a house undertakes to carry out certain works, after the house has been represented to the Council, as being unfit for human habitation, under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936.

I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the Members of the Council and the Staff for the help and co-operation which I have received from them,

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1952.

Area (Acres)	86,000
Population (Registrar General's estimate) 1952.	19,470
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1952.	5,650
Rateable value on 31st December, 1952.	£83,261
Sum represented by 1d. rate on 31st December, 1952.	£ 332

Live Births.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	148	158	306
Illegitimate	5	7	12
	<u>153</u>	<u>165</u>	<u>318</u>
<u>Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 of estimated resident population			16.33
Corrected Birth Rate			18.29
<u>Still Births</u>			8
<u>Still Birth Rate</u> per 1,000 total (live & still) births			24.54
<u>Death Rate</u> per 1,000 of the estimated resident population.			12.12
Corrected Death Rate			10.54
Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)			
	Legitimate	6	
	Illegitimate	-	
		<u>6</u>	
Rate of all infants per 1,000 births			18.87
Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births			19.16
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births			Nil.

Other Deaths

Deaths from Heart Disease	80
Deaths from Cancer	38
Deaths from Tuberculosis	4

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births

After allowing for inward and outward transfers, the figure allocated by the Registrar General for live births in the Rural District was 318, 153 were male and 165 were female.

For the third year in succession there were no illegitimate births in the District.

Birth Rates.

	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952
Bridgwater Rural District.	18.96	18.54	17.42	20.61	18.39	14.33	15.98	15.54	16.33
England & Wales.	17.6	16.6	19.1	20.5	17.9	16.7	15.8	15.5	15.3

Deaths.

After allowing for inward and outward deaths the total allocated to the Rural District was 236; 126 were males and 110 were females. The Crude Death Rate 12.12, and the Corrected Death Rate 10.54 as compared with 11.01 the previous year.

Of the total of 236 deaths, 102 occurred in people over the age of 70 years. The primary cause of death was heart disease 80, with cancer second 38.

The Crude Death Rate for the past nine years is as follows :-

1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952
13.29	12.41	13.89	13.13	10.62	12.06	11.78	12.65	12.12

Infant Mortality.

The number of children dying within the first twelve months of life was 6, which is slightly lower than the previous year. The rate per 1,000 of all live births was 36.44.

Infantile Mortality during 1952.

Cause of death.	Under 1 wk.	1-2 wks.	3-4 wks.	1-6 mths.	6-12 mths.	Total under 1 year.
Asphyxia due to suffocation by turning on face in bed.					1	1
Bronchitis				1		1
Convulsions					1	1
Prematurity	2					2
Cerebral haemorrhage.	1					1
TOTAL	3			1	2	6

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1952.

CAUSE OF DEATH	M.	F.	TOTAL
ALL CAUSES.	126	110	236
1. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	1	2	3
2. Other forms of tuberculosis	1	-	1
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping Cough	-	1	1
6. Meningococcal infection	-	-	-
7. Acute Polio-myelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	-
10. Malignant neoplasm of stomach	7	5	12
11. Malignant neoplasm of lung, bronchus	3	-	3
12. Malignant neoplasm of breast	-	6	6
13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	11	5	16
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	1	-	1
16. Diabetes	-	-	-
17. Vascular lesions of nervous system	14	24	38
18. Coronary disease, angina	23	9	32
19. Hypertension with heart disease	3	3	6
20. Other heart diseases	18	24	42
21. Other circulatory diseases	6	9	15
22. Influenza	1	1	2
23. Pneumonia	3	5	8
24. Bronchitis	5	5	10
25. Other diseases of the respiratory system	1	1	2
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	5	-	5
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	1	-	1
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	2	-	2
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	1	-	1
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	-	-
31. Congenital malformations	1	-	1
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	7	9	16
33. Motor vehicle accidents	2	-	2
34. All other accidents	5	-	5
35. Suicide	3	-	3
36. Homicide and operations of war	1	-	1

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS
AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable infectious diseases that occurred in the Rural District during 1952. The table is drawn up after making the necessary amendments to the original notifications owing to corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioner or the Medical Officer at the Isolation Hospital

DISEASE	CASES NOTIFIED.	
	1952.	1951.
Measles.	13	371
Scarlet Fever	31	26
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	2
Dysentery	3	1
Whooping Cough	63	63
Pneumonia	11	13
Poliomyelitis	1	1
Erysipelas	3	-
Meningococcal infection	-	1
Food Poisoning	-	4
TOTALS	126	482

The total of 126 is about a quarter the corresponding figure for the previous year. It should be noted that Whooping Cough, with 63 notifications, accounted for half of this figure. This disease is frequently followed by complications affecting the respiratory system, which cause considerable ill health, especially during school life and which require prolonged treatment before cure is effected.

It is now possible to immunise children against whooping cough and diphtheria at the same time, although research is still being carried out by the Medical Research Council to determine the most efficacious vaccine against whooping cough, and preliminary reports are most encouraging. A considerable reduction in the incidence of whooping cough would be a major advance in the field of preventive medicine.

Infantile Paralysis.

Although there was a moderate incidence of infantile paralysis in Somerset, only one case was notified in the Bridgwater Rural District, and this was a case most likely infected before arrival in the District.

Diphtheria Immunisation.

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year.

Aged under 5 years.	Aged 5-15 years.	TOTAL.
184	35	219

The method of protection commonly in use is to give each child two immunising injections at the age of one year, and a third re-inforcing injection early in school life. The re-inforcing injection is most important to ensure protection during the early school years, and 303 such injections were given during the year.

Vaccination against Smallpox.

No cases of smallpox occurred in the Bridgwater Rural District during 1952. 81 Primary vaccinations and 28 re-vaccinations against smallpox were carried out by private general practitioners during the year. The following table,

giving the age distribution of persons vaccinated, shows that only 57 children under the age of 1 year received primary vaccination, while the number of live births for the year was 318.

Persons vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) in 1952.

Under 1		1		2 - 4		5 - 14		15 or over.		Totals.	
P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R	P	R
57	-	5	-	3	1	4	2	12	25	81	28

P = Primary Vaccination.

R = Re-vaccination.

The proportion of the population vaccinated against smallpox has fallen very considerably since the inception of the National Health Service Act 1946, which repealed compulsory vaccination. This trend is to be regretted, as due to the increased facilities for international travelling, the risk of importation of the disease is greater, and all parents are advised to have their children vaccinated, preferably at about the age of 4 months.

Tuberculosis.

There were 23 cases of respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. This figure for respiratory cases is the same as the previous year. No cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis were notified.

As a means of detecting early and unsuspected cases of tuberculosis, arrangements were made for the Moss Radiography Unit of the South West Regional Hospital Board to visit Bridgwater in September. The attendance was very satisfactory and the unit visited the larger factories before being stationed at the Health Centre. Although chiefly attended by persons living in Bridgwater, the sessions during which examinations were available to members of the public were attended by many people residing in the Rural District.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948, Section 47.

This Section of the Act enables Local Authorities to apply to Court for an Order to secure the care of persons who, by reason of infirmity, old age or other conditions, are unable to care for themselves and are not receiving from other people proper care and attention, and who are living in insanitary conditions. Several cases were dealt with, but in no case was it found necessary to proceed for a Court Order. In all cases alternative means were found to alleviate unsatisfactory conditions.

Food Poisoning.

I am happy to report that no cases of food poisoning were notified during the year.

Ante-Natal Clinics.

No Local Authority Ante-Natal Clinics are held in the area, supervision being conducted by General Practitioners and Midwives. A number of expectant mothers attend at a clinic at the Health Centre, Mount Street, Bridgwater, when blood samples are taken for determination of blood grouping, Rhesus factor, etc.

Infant Welfare.

Infant Welfare Clinics, for which the County Council are responsible, are held at Edington, Puriton, Woolavington, North Petherton, Nether Stowey, East Huntspill and West Huntspill.

Water Supply.

Samples of water have been regularly taken from the various sources of supply during the year, and generally speaking these have been satisfactory. Except in special and isolated circumstances the quantity of water proved sufficient for the needs of the district.

Progress was made with the Over Stowey scheme, which was completed during the year

Supply.	Number of examinations.	Report.	
		Satisfactory.	Not satisfactory.
1. Fiddington	12	12	-
2. Goathurst	12	12	-
3. Nether Stowey	13	9	4
4. Thurloxtan	14	12	2
5. Willoughby	13	12	1
6. Over Stowey	9	8	1

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR
FOR 1952.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my thirteenth Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1952.

Staff.

No alterations affecting the staff of the Department took place during the year, and the staff remains at one Junior Assistant below the approved establishment.

The Additional Sanitary Inspector continues to assist the Engineer's staff as required in the inspection of property under the Building Byelaws, in accordance with the Council's instructions.

Complaints and Nuisances.

The number of complaints investigated during the year was 149 a decrease of 17 on the previous year. In most cases nuisances were abated as a result of informal action and it was only found necessary to serve 4 Abatement Notices. On inspection a number of complaints were found to be not justified and no further action was taken in regard to them.

Of the nuisances found, 117 were abated during the year. Difficulty was again experienced in securing compliance with informal and statutory notices to abate nuisances, reasons given being the high cost of work and the low rents received from cottage property. The number of visits made in connection with nuisances was 334.

Water Supply.

Samples of water for bacteriological examination were taken from the five sources of supply controlled by the Council at monthly intervals during the year, and additional samples were obtained as found necessary.

A total of 98 visits were made in connection with water supply during the year.

Housing.

The number of inspections carried out under the Housing Acts was 105; 10 houses were represented as unfit for habitation and incapable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost and three Demolition Orders were made by the Council. In 3 cases the Council agreed to accept undertakings from owners to carry out approved works within a stipulated time, and in 2 cases undertakings which had been previously accepted were fulfilled. 4 houses, the subject of Demolition Orders, were demolished during the year, and three houses on which Demolition Orders had been made were, with the Council's permission, converted into stores.

By reason of the acute housing shortage the Council are extremely reluctant to make Demolition Orders and only do so after the owner has been given every opportunity to put forward an acceptable list of works which he is prepared to carry out. There is, however, a danger in accepting works to a very low standard, which the Council have been doing during the past few years, and it should be borne in mind that after an undertaking has been accepted and the agreed work carried out the house must be considered as fit for human habitation and likely to remain so fit for a period of years, given reasonable maintenance. In the course of time further defects to old properties are certain to arise and it is important to anticipate these as far as possible in considering lists of works. A reasonably high standard should therefore be required in order to avoid the difficult position which would arise if an owner had to be required to carry out further work after only a short period had elapsed from the reconditioning of a house.

The high cost of building work is still one of the greatest difficulties encountered in getting repairs and improvements to property carried out.

The increase in the number of Council houses being built is having a slow but appreciable effect in reducing the number of cases of families in urgent need of accommodation, although there are a considerable number of families still in need of improved accommodation by reason of the fact that they are living in insanitary houses or in overcrowded conditions. The relief of these cases must inevitably be a slow process, and will be rendered more difficult by the reluctance of some tenants of insanitary but low rented houses to transfer to hygienic but more expensive Council houses.

It is, of course, a statutory duty to allocate Council houses to families in the greatest need, and it is submitted that this need should over-ride all other considerations. Families with an urgent housing need should have full consideration even if the house in which they reside is not within the parish in which a vacant Council house is situated.

527 visits were made during the year in regard to the reconditioning and alteration of existing houses and the installation of new sanitary fittings.

110 visits were made to houses in respect to which grants were made under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts and the Housing (Financial Provisions) Acts.

Overcrowding.

Five new cases of overcrowding were discovered during the year, and six cases were abated by informal action, including one case outstanding from the previous year.

Twenty nine visits were made in connection with overcrowding.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part 1 of the Factories Act, 1937:-

Premises	Number on Register	Insp.	Number of	
			Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities.	89	61	9	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority.	-	-	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises).	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	89	61	9	-

	No. of cases in which defects were Found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Insp.	By H.M. Insp.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1.)	9	9		2	
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary conveniences (s.7)					
(a) insufficient					
(b) unsuitable or defective					
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)					
TOTAL	9	9		2	

Bakehouses.

Forty seven visits were made to bakehouses, and informal notices were duly complied with.

Shops.

Sixty inspections of shops were carried out.

General Sanitation.

The following improvements were carried out, generally as a result of informal action:-

W.C.s	63
Baths	28
Sinks	34
Chemical closets	3
Drainage systems	43
Lavatory basins	27
Connections to water main	6
Connections to sewer	4
Larders	10

A number of other minor improvements were also carried out.

Meat and Foods.

Every effort was made during the year to maintain the regular inspection of meat and other food at retail shops and slaughterhouses and 137 visits were made for this purpose.

It is also the practice to inspect the meat of animals killed for home consumption under licences issued by the Food Control Committee, and in view of the percentage of animals found to be diseased, this practice has been found to be justified. 279 visits were made for this purpose.

I give below details of food condemned during the year:-

Beasts.

Carcase and organs	1
Beef	12½ lbs.

Sheep.

Carcase and organs	2
--------------------	---

Pigs.

Carcase and organs	2
Head and tongue	5
Lungs	1
Mesenteries and intestines	8
Plucks	4

Other foods.

Tins, jars and pkts of various foods	34
Rabbits	2

Knackers Yard.

The knackers yard at Dunball is being maintained in very good condition and was visited on 12 occasions during the year.

Milk and Dairies.

The number of retail purveyors of milk on the register is 15, and 12 visits were made for the inspection of dairies during the year.

Ice Cream.

The number of premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream at the end of the year was 53, and 5 premises were also registered for the manufacture of ice cream. Each of these manufacturers produced ice cream by the "cold mix" method, followed by boiling of the product. Eighty seven samples were taken during the year the results being as follows:-

67 samples were placed in provisional Grade 1.
16 samples were placed in provisional Grade 2.
No samples were placed in provisional Grade 3.
4 samples were placed in provisional Grade 4.

These results are considered to be very satisfactory.

A total of 130 visits were made in connection with the manufacture, storage and sale of ice cream.

Moveable Dwellings.

101 visits were made during the year in connection with moveable dwellings.

There are now seven licensed camping sites in the district, all of which are small. Licences have been issued to station and use twenty four caravans on individual sites, and there is an increasing tendency to use caravans as permanent homes.

Infectious Diseases.

37 disinfections were carried out during the year, 83 visits being made in connection with infectious diseases.

Verminous Premises.

18 visits were made to verminous premises and treatment for the destruntion of vermin was carried out at 8 premises.

Rodent Destruction.

46 visits were made in connection with rodent infestation in addition to those made by the Rodent Operative.

It was not found necessary to serve any enforcement notices requiring the destruction of rodents. Where infestation is found on agricultural land it is the practice to refer the matter to the County Agricultural Executive Committee and the necessary treatment is then carried out by the Committee's staff by arrangement with the occupier of the land.

To a large extent "Warfarin" has been used for rodent destruction in place of arsenic, zinc phosphide, etc., with very satisfactory results and considerable saving in time.

Atmospheric Pollution.

10 observations were made after the receipt of complaints of excessive emission of smoke from the boiler chimney of a hostel. After informal action a considerable improvement was noted.

SUMMARY OF VISITS.

Water Supply	98
Drainage	192
Knackers Yard	12
Moveable Dwellings	101
Factories	21
Bakehouses	47
Shops	60
Rodent Infestation	46
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	62
Nuisances	334
New Work	527
Housing Inspections	125
Overcrowding	29
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	24
Infectious Diseases	83
Verminous Premises	18
Butchers' Shops and Slaughterhouses	137
Animals killed for home consumption	279
Dairies	12
Ice cream Premises	130
Miscellaneous Food Visits	24
Housing (R.W.) Acts, etc.	110
Food Preparing Premises.	115
Atmospheric Pollution	10
Licensed Premises	27

2,623

This does not include visits made by the Additional Sanitary Inspector for the inspection of property under Building Byelaws.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

F.A. MAILE.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

